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Preschool Program, Fresno, California; One of a Series of Successful Compensatory Education Programs. It Works: Preschool Program in Compensatory Education.

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For each of 4 years varying numbers (from 45 to 750) of 3- to 5-year-old children, mostly Mexican-American, Spanish speaking, participated in a program aimed at language development. Classes met 3 hours daily, five times a week, in small discussion-and-activity groups that included five children and one adult. The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test was used as a pretest and posttest measure. On the pilot project nearly every child raised his IQ by 10 to 20 points. For the second year, there were negligible gains, possibly due to the brevity of the program (2 to 5 months) and the teachers' lack of nursery experience. The third year's test results, which were divided into three ethnic groups (Caucasian, Negro, and Mexican-American), were compared. The groups differed significantly on the pretest but not on the posttest. All groups gained significantly. The same procedure was followed the fourth year, and all groups gained significantly. (JS)

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PRESCHOOL PROGRAM
Fresno, California

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IT WORKS

PRESCHOOL PROGRAM
FRESNO, CALIFORNIA

One of a Series of

Successful Compensatory Education Programs

U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare
Robert H. Finch, Secretary

Office of Education
Peter P. Muirhead, Acting Commissioner

FOREWORD

This project report is part of an independent study of selected exemplary programs for the education of disadvantaged children completed by the American Institutes for Research in the Behavioral Sciences, Palo Alto, Calif., under contract with the U.S. Office of Education.

The researchers report this project significantly improved the educational attainment of the disadvantaged children involved. Other communities, in reviewing the educational needs of the disadvantaged youngsters they serve, may wish to use this project as a model - adapting it to their specific requirements and resources.

Division of Compensatory Education
Bureau of Elementary and Secondary Education

THE PRESCHOOL PROGRAM OF FRESNO, CALIFORNIA

Introduction

This program emphasized language development, through the use of small discussion-and-activity groups including not more than five children to one adult. Teacher aides and parent volunteers made this low child-adult ratio possible.

The children were 3 to 5 years of age, mostly Mexican-American, Spanish-speaking. Approximately two-thirds of them were from families receiving welfare; the remaining students were chosen on the basis of the family's economic need and English-language deprivation.

This was an academic-year program which began in 1964-65 with a pilot study involving approximately 45 students. It grew through succeeding years and by 1967-68 included 750 students in 50 classes at 19 elementary school sites.

Achievement gains in vocabulary proficiency were measured by the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test.

Personnel

A. Program Coordinator.

The program coordinator assumed general administrative responsibility for all aspects of the program.

B. Resource Teachers. (Two in number, one full-time, one half-time.)

> They assisted the coordinator in all phases of the preschool program; assisted the teachers in planning for parent participation in the preschool program and for parent education meetings. They helped to provide in-service training for teachers by planning and writing newsletters, bulletins, and study guides listing seasonal or relevant program ideas, suggestions, and activities; provided assistance in the classroom to teachers who requested help (Gillen, et al., 1966).

C. Teachers. (Fifty in number, half-time, one per preschool class. Certified, most with an elementary or kindergarten credential. Others certified with a secondary home economics credential, since requirements

for this credential included considerable study of child development. Some others had "special children's centers permits," which were issued to personnel with bachelor's degrees in other fields. Of the 50 teachers in 1967-68, five were Negro and one Mexican-American; effort was being made to recruit more teachers from the latter group.)

They assumed responsibility for the instruction of one class, with the assistance of the teacher aide and parent volunteers; they conducted a parent meeting every second week.

D. Teacher Aides. (Fifty in number; one per class; non-certified; facility in the Spanish language. Some parents became teacher aides after experience as volunteers in the instructional program.)

The teacher aides assisted the teacher with classroom instruction; they took her place when she had to confer with visitors, parents, or nurse. They assisted her with home calls and parent meetings.

E. Nurses. (Three full-time; two part-time.)

The nurses appraised hearing, vision, dental condition, and health problems of the children; they attempted to secure remediation and treatment through the support of the family, and welfare-and-community agencies. They maintained health records, and assisted with the health education of parents and children in the classroom and at parent meetings.

F. Secretaries. (Two in number; full-time. Located at the office of the coordinator.)

The secretaries prepared cumulative records on all children. They typed such things as invoices, forms, and instructional materials.

In addition, other school personnel had part-time or auxiliary responsibility for the project. The preschool classrooms were located on elementary school sites in the target area, and became an administrative part of each school. Thus, the school principal had the usual administrative responsibilities for the preschool on his campus, and his secretarial, custodial, and cafeteria staff were similarly responsible for such things as preschool student records, plant maintenance, and provision of milk. The department of preschool education was completely responsible for the curriculum, however. (Additionally, the district director of compensatory education had administrative responsibilities for this as well as for other compensatory projects, as did the district evaluation specialist.)

Methodology: General

The emphasis of the program was upon verbal communication and vocabulary development with each child spending most of his class time in a small discussion-and-activity group that included one adult and a few children. In this way, the child could verbalize naturally and frequently in a conversation, rather than having to raise his hand and await his infrequent opportunity to respond to the questions of the teacher. A favorable child-adult ratio was possible since there were not more than 15 children per class, along with one teacher, one teacher aide, and at least one parent volunteer.

Activities included experiences in: language (fingerplays, telephones); music (singing, rhythmic and interpretive physical reactions such as marching, being bears, being trees in the wind); arts and crafts (fingerpainting, clay); science (living things, magnets); health and safety (rest, nutrition, toileting, cleanliness); games and educational toys (puzzles, tinkertoys). The California climate also permits major emphasis upon the outdoors as a classroom, and the curriculum includes walks and bus trips.

Each class met 3 hours per day, 5 days per week, for the academic year. Classes were conducted in 27 portable classrooms set up at 19 elementary school sites. Two classes per day met in each room, one group from 8:30 to 11:30 and the other from 12:30 to 3:30. Each teacher and aide worked with one class only.

As vacancies occurred in a class, they were filled from a waiting list. Some children remained in the program for 2 years, some for one; all remained until ready for kindergarten.

Parent involvement was considered an important component of the program. In the classroom, the parent was encouraged and allowed to play a full instructional role with the discussion-activity group of which she had charge -- she was not merely treated as a "helper." The program coordinator described parent activity during the 1966-67 school year as follows (Forrester, 1967, pp. 9-10):

> PARENT PARTICIPATION IN THE PRESCHOOL PROGRAM 1966-67
>
> During the 1966-67 school year, we encouraged the parents of enrolled children to participate in the preschool program as much as possible. The goal towards which we worked was to have a parent or other responsible adult from each child's home participate one day a week at school; attend parent meetings (two per month); and join the class for study trips.

We planned with the parents for the staffing of the preschool classes and tried to help find solutions for baby-sitting problems and transportation needs. Our Spanish-speaking aides were often helpful in explaining school procedure and helping Mexican-American parents feel comfortable.

We planned with the parents the ways in which they would work at school. They did many things that needed to be done and many other things that they wanted to do. Parents mixed paint, served food, read stories, turned jump ropes, rocked children, rubbed backs at rest time, saw that children did a good job of hand washing, made piñatas, dried tears, answered questions, repaired equipment, brought animals to school, and generally contributed much to the children's program.

We tried to keep those parents who were unable to attend children's classes or parent meetings informed of what was going on through bulletins, letters, phone calls, and home calls.

We talked to the parents to find the best time to schedule parent meetings. Some teachers had a set meeting time during the month, others called meetings at varying times. Meetings were held during the day; at night; after study trips; after a birthday celebration or after a specially planned lunch, potluck or even breakfast. In some instances volunteers helped care for children during parent meetings.

Children helped prepare for parent meetings by making invitations, tape recordings of class activities, or a simple dessert!

The teachers tried to find and follow the needs and interests of each particular group in planning for the meetings.

Parent meetings were held in each preschool center at least twice per month during the 1967-68 school year.

Included among the topics for one month were: "philosophy and aims of preschool"; "values we want our children to hold"; "discipline"; "staffing and study trip plans"; "adult-education class offsprings"; topics on nutrition and immunizations; and participation in craft projects, sewing, and attendance at a PTA meeting. Book and film discussions were the vehicle for some topics.

Another instrument of parent involvement was the parents' advisory committee, which met once per month. This committee made recommendations which were acted upon by the preschool staff. For instance: that a handbook for parents be published (this was done); that a preschool-kindergarten articulation program be started (this was begun).

Study trips were considered to be an important part of the curriculum. Each class took five bus trips per year, in addition to many walking trips and outings via parent car pool. In addition, parents were occasionally taken on a bus trip first, to become familiar with the place being visited. A subsequent bus trip was for children and parents together, so that parents might serve as guides and instructors for their children. Parents often followed up this trip with a family outing to the site. For many parents, the study trips constituted the first visit to the study site. For instance, of 18 parents visiting a local museum, only one had been there previously.

During the 1967-68 school year, study trips exclusively for adult family members were made to the Art Center, the Museum, a dam, a dairy, and a rug mill. As a follow-up, a leaflet was prepared listing places to visit and things to see and do around the city.

Many volunteers have given freely of their time and talent to the preschool programs. The Fresno Volunteer Bureau and other community groups have recruited volunteers for the program. A total of 32 volunteers contributed their time and services during the 1967-68 year.

A monthly staff meeting was conducted. Sample topics included "concept and vocabulary development," "psychological services for preschool children," "music for young children." These sessions were often conducted by outside experts. Depending upon the topic, some meetings were for the teachers, while others might be for the entire preschool staff. Also, a monthly staff bulletin was issued, with contributions from teachers, notices of meetings, trips, and other current ne

Through the 1967-68 school year, 29 inservice and/or organizational meetings were held for preschool teachers and aides. Seven of these meetings were for teachers only, three were for aides only, and the remaining 19 meetings were held for teachers and aides together. In order to make communication easier and to adapt schedules to the needs of the teachers and aides, four small daytime meetings were often held on one topic, rather than calling an evening meeting for one hundred people. Invitations were extended to preschool and Head Start personnel of outlying areas not attached to the Fresno City Unified School District for those meetings which were not organizational in content.

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Because it was felt that greater articulation was needed between preschool and kindergarten, an articulation pilot program was begun at one of the school sites in 1966-67. In this program, mothers of kindergarten children continued to assist in classroom instruction, as they had done the previous year in preschool, and preschool staff introduced the kindergarten teachers to the methods and philosophy of the preschool.

Methodology: Specific Examples

Program activities were designed: 1) to develop a functional English vocabulary by presenting new words in the context of the students' activities; 2) to encourage the child to vocalize freely in English; 3) to introduce the child to standard sentence structure through example; 4) to stress listening and speaking skills; 5) to emphasize articulation by example rather than correction. To these ends:

A. Children played classification games, such as sorting pictures of animals into groups such as farm animals, pets, zoo animals.

B. The children sang songs or recited poems chosen specifically to help them produce sounds from the standard English repertoire. Fingerplays, in which the children gestured to illustrate the song-poem, were the vehicle used to encourage participation.

Teachers used a list of "English Sounds for Which There is No Equivalent in Spanish," along with a list of 58 fingerplays appropriate for each sound. Following are some of the sounds and fingerplays, the numbers after each sound refer to the appropriate fingerplays [Fresno Unified School District, 1966 (?)].

i him, this, his.

This sound has no equivalent in Spanish. There will be a tendency to pronounce these words as heem, thees, hees. 18-20 and 22, 24, 25.

j jump, judge.

This sound has no counterpart in Spanish and must be taught. J is sometimes substituted for y in such words as yes, yellow.
21-25.

ng Children who speak Spanish tend to make the sound of ng with an added k or g sound following the blend as - singging, singger.
26-27.

18. Tippy tippy tiptoe,
Here we go,
Tippy tippy tiptoe,
to and fro.
Tippy tippy tiptoe
Through the house.
Tippy tippy tiptoe,
Quiet as a mouse.

19. Little brown rabbit went hippity hop,
Into the garden without any stop.
Hippity, hop, hippity hop
He ate for his supper a fresh carrot top
Hippity hop, hippity hop
Then home went the rabbit without any stop.
Hippity hop, hippity hop.

20. This little frog broke his toe,
This little frog said, Oh, Oh!
This little frog laughed and was glad
This little frog was very sad
This little frog did just what he should:
He ran for the doctor as fast as he could.

21. Jack be nimble, Jack be quick
Jack jump over the candlestick.

22. Two little blackbirds
Sitting on a hill
One named Jack
The other named Jill
Fly away Jack, Fly away Jill
Come back Jack, Come back Jill

23. Five little Jack-o-lanterns sitting on a gate
The first one said, "Oh, my, it's getting late".
The second one said "There are witches in the air".
The third one said, "Oh, I don't care"
The fourth one said, It's just Halloween fun".
The fifth one said, "Come on. let's run".
"Whooooooooo" said the wind
And out went the light.
Away ran these Jack-o-laterns on Halloween night.

24. Jack and Jill (traditional)

25. Jack-in-the-box sits so still
Will he come out?
Oh, yes, he will!

26. The little mice are creeping, creeping, creeping,
The little mice are nibbling, nibbling, nibbling,
The little mice are sleeping, sleeping, sleeping.
The old grey cat comes creeping, creeping, creeping
Scamper, Scamper, Scamper!

27. Merry bells are ringing
Boys and girls are singing
Candle lights are glowing
Winter winds are blowing
Fairies are a-dancing
Reindeer are a-prancing
Christmas trees are gleaming
Silver stars are beaming
It's Christmas!

C. During one of the walking trips the children visited a garden and observed and discussed the various types of plants growing there. They later grew their own tulips at school and measured and charted their growth by drawings. The vocabulary words taught from these combined activities included: digging, watering, twigs, sprouts, buds, leaves, bulbs, roots, earth.

Evaluation

A. Measures of Achievement

A statistical report was not available on the 1964-1965 preschool pilot project. It was noted in the narrative report for that year, however, that the children "were evaluated over a period of one year and a half," and that on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test "nearly every child raised his IQ by 10 to 20 points". (Fresno City Unified School District, 1965, p.21).

In 1965-66 the Peabody was used again on a pretest - posttest basis. However, the program was of very short duration, beginning January 31 in some schools and March 28 in others. It was hypothesized in the 1965-1966 evaluation report that the brevity of the program, coupled with the fact that teachers did not have previous nursery experience, accounted in large part for the negligible gains reported.

Only the gain for one school was reported as being statistically significant (Fresno City Unified School District, 1966).

Again during the 1966-67 year the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) was administered in a pretest - posttest design. Because of lack of test materials the pretest (Form A) was not administered until December while Form B was administered at the end of May. A bivariate analysis of 428 pupils who took both tests was done. The three ethnic groups, Caucasian, Mexican-American, and Negro were treated separately to determine whether there was a difference between ethnic groups as they entered preschools and whether there was a difference between groups as to benefit from the program. An analysis of variance was made of the pretest means of the three groups and also of the posttest means. A "t" test of significance of difference between correlated means was computed for each group to test the significance of each ethnic group's gain.

The results of the analysis are presented below.

Table 1

COMPARISON OF PPVT PRETEST AND POSTTEST MEANS FOR EACH GROUP IN THE FRESNO PRESCHOOL PROGRAM, 1966-67

	Total	Caucasian	Mexican-American	Negro	F
Pretest Mean	84.3	94.9	82.1	80.0	6.80*
Posttest Mean	96.5	98.9	94.3	98.1	1.78
"t"	7.24*	2.10*	8.16*	7.80*	

* Difference significant at .05 level.

[Adapted from Table I, page 61, Fresno City Unified School District (1967)]

As noted, the total sample and all three separate groups made statistically significant gains. The means of the three ethnic groups differed significantly from one another on the pretest measure, but there was no statistically significant difference between the three means on the posttest measure.

It was concluded from these data that the three ethnic groups involved in this program came to the program with differing verbal

ability and/or vocabulary as measured by the PPVT. This difference may be due to differing backgrounds of verbal experience or perhaps some other variable. This difference was gone by the end of the treatment period, again as measured by the PPVT. It is important to note that while the differences between the group means disappeared, it was not due to gain on the part of a low group or groups while the higher group or groups showed no gain: all groups showed significant gain, but the gains were such as to equalize verbal ability as measured by the PPVT.

For the 1967-68 school year the PPVT Form A was administered as a pretest in September and as a posttest in May. Only the children who took both tests were considered in the analysis. A test of the significance of gain was computed for each class and for each major ethnic group in the program. An analysis of variance was computed to determine whether the major participating ethnic groups differed from one another on the pretest and/or posttest.

Of the 47 classes considered, 38 gained significantly in intelligence as measured by the PPVT. Also, as shown below, each major ethnic group gained significantly.

Table 2

COMPARISON OF PPVT PRETEST AND POSTTEST MEANS FOR EACH GROUP IN THE FRESNO PRESCHOOL PROGRAM 1967-68

Ethnic Group	N	Pretest Mean	Pretest S.D.	Posttest Mean	Posttest S.D.	r	Diff.	t
Mexican-American	198	83.7	15.32	98.8	13.42	.62	+15.1	16.62*
Negro	165	85.4	14.98	101.0	12.41	.62	+15.6	16.44*
All Others	89	94.3	17.8	106.3	14.89	.72	+12.0	8.95*

* Significant at .05 level.

[Adapted from Table III, page 109, Fresno City Unified School District, (1968)]

The analysis of variance revealed significant differences between ethnic groups on both pretests and posttests.

The conclusion stated in the 1967-68 evaluation report was as follows (Fresno City Unified School District, 1968, p. 107):

> As evidenced by the PPVT, this program has been successful in increasing the intelligence of preschool children as measured by the PPVT. Whether or not this gain is lasting, or will result in better performance and learning in the primary grades, has yet to be demonstrated. This question, as to the longitudinal benefits of this program, is being explored.

B. Other Evaluation Indices

In 1966-67, teachers and social case workers were asked to respond to opinionnaires concerning the program and its effect upon children and parents. Ratings were quite positive. Also, the parents' advisory committee strongly recommended extension of the program to more children. An increased sense of community was noted, as evidenced by a San Francisco excursion and a Mexican-American fair, both arranged by and at the initiative of the parents. During the 1967-68 school year, parents of the preschool children became interested in furthering their own education. All mothers whose children were enrolled in the preschool classes at one location attended an adult school sponsored jointly by the County Welfare Department and the Fresno Adult School. As a result of becoming involved in the preschool programs, many parents and aides served as officers and committee members on the school's PTA boards.

C. Modifications

The staff has expressed a felt need for a greater articulation of the preschool and kindergarten programs, if the latter is to capitalize adequately on the gains achieved in preschool. As a result of meetings and a questionnaire survey conducted during the 1967-68 school year, the children in the 1968-69 school year will be grouped in kindergarten classes in order to follow preschool and Head Start children through the kindergarten year. No one class will be made up entirely of preschool or Head Start children, nor will these children be "scattered" through every kindergarten class in the school. By identifying and grouping the children, an enriched instructional program of inservice education can be provided for teachers and aides. As a result of early identification and grouping of children for instructional purposes, a design for continuous evaluation can be set up. Principals, preschool and kindergarten teachers, parents and others will meet regularly to exchange ideas and information in order to provide the necessary continuity for children and programs.

Budget for 1967-68 School Year

	Program Coordinator	Full-time
2	Resource Teachers	1 full-time 1 half-time
50	Teachers (one per class	Half-time
50	Teacher Aides (one per class)	Half-time
5	Nurses	3 full, 2 part-time
2	Secretaries	
27	Portable buildings	1 per 2 classes
	Custodial service	1 hr/day/building

Materials cost = $125/class, then $75 ($125 in year 1, $75 in subsequent years). $480,000 for 750 children was total cost of program for 1967-68.

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* The Office of Education is collecting this material for placement in the ERIC system. Items may be obtained either in microfiche or hard copy.

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